

Olympic inspiration at Havering College Pages 10 & 11



Survey says employers must pay

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Majority of colleges and training providers support minimum fee for apprenticeships

A minimum employer fee for apprentices aged 19 or above has been supported by professionals in the further education (FE) sector, according to a new survey.

The research, conducted by Lsect, funding consultancy and publisher of *FE Week*, shows that of those who had a view, 60 per cent of respondents said they thought it would be a "quite good" or "very good" idea if the government introduced a minimum fee for 19+ apprenticeships.

Allan Lewis, managing director of Education and Training Associates Ltd, said: "It will create a level playing field and encourage greater commitment from employers towards the programme and its delivery."

"Hopefully it would lead to increased support to learners and increased monitoring of their progress by employers to achieve the outcomes."

The survey had 194 respondents including senior managers of private training providers, union representatives, as well as MIS managers, principals and vice principals from FE colleges.

Mick Fletcher, a visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Education

and consultant, said: "There is little evidence of employer contributions in cash or kind."

"If employers want to 'own' skills they should pay their share, not seek to redirect taxpayers' money to cover their own costs."

The minimum fee could involve a variable but standard level of funding contribution, set by government, which colleges and training providers would have to collect from employers for any new apprentice aged 19 and above.

The fee could also be collected from the employer after the college or training provider has drawn down funding from its Skills Funding Agency (SFA) allocation.

Nick Linford, managing editor of *FE Week*, says it is "implausible" to expect that high quality training could be delivered without charging the employer.

Speaking at an evidence session held by the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee for their inquiry into apprenticeships last week, he said: "I think the only way to go, really, is down the route of minimum fees."

"If the government expects to get

high quality the only way is for the employer to contribute and I think the government plays a huge role in changing the culture of employers to put their hand in their pocket and pay for it."

"Employers will expect a lot more when they pay for it and you know they'll want it and use it well when they're paying for it."

Martin Doel, chief executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC) added during an earlier evidence session: "We need to get to grips with the employer contribution."

Minimum employer fees were addressed in the "Independent review of fees and co-funding in Further Education in England" carried out by Christopher Banks CBE in July 2010.

"Any failure to collect the minimum fee would be reported and could lead to "clawback" of funding by the Government in an annual reconciliation process," it states.

"In this way, the minimum fee approach would act as a stronger fees target system, where there is a real penalty for colleges and training providers, in terms of losing funding through clawback, if they fail to bring in the minimum fee."

The Lsect survey also showed that of those who expressed a view about the issue, 40 per cent had reservations about introducing a minimum employer fee.

Breda Leyne, learning and development consultant at Cogito Development Projects, said: "Although I agree employers might value something they have paid for better in truth the need now is to get young people into some kind of work environment and that might need to have employers incentivised."

The survey also asked professionals what they thought of the 12 month minimum duration introduced for apprentices aged 16 to 18.

Almost 90 per cent of respondents who had a view said the prescribed length of time was a "quite good" or "very good" idea, while just over 10 per cent thought it was a bad idea.

The survey also asked respondents what they thought of the rapid increase in apprentices aged 25 and above.

Of those who had a view, 54 per cent said they were not supportive of the growth in adult apprenticeships.

For further analysis see the technical spread on pages 8 & 9

Monday 23 April 2012

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Looking at ATAs



FE Week takes a close look at Apprenticeship Training Agencies

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Interview with the new CEO of the Workers' Educational Association

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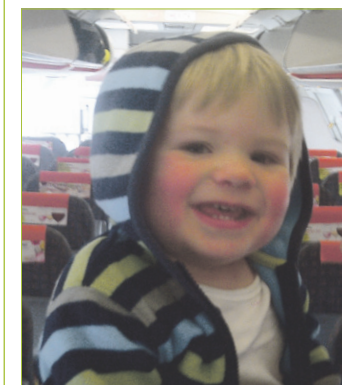
BIS Select Committee



Martin Doel, Tom Wilson and Nick Linford gave evidence this week

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Mini Mascot



This week our mini mascot is jetsetting around the world!

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inside...



FE Week is a new newspaper dedicated to reporting on news, analysis, jobs and fun in the FE sector.

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Innovation Code criticised for not going far enough

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A new flexible provision to deliver programmes tackling localised skills needs has been introduced in the FE sector.

The Innovation Code, which formed part of the commitments featured within New Challenges, New Chances, is now live.

Although the Code has been widely well received, sector membership bodies have told *FE Week* that they hoped it would go further.

As set out by the Skills Funding Agency, it features six learning aims, which can be used to develop and deliver provision, in conjunction with local business and employers, which addresses current or future skills needs.

It comes following recommendations in Baroness Sharp's report, issued in November, on colleges in their communities, A Dynamic Nucleus.

Association of Colleges' (AoC) director of policy, Joy Mercer, said: "While the innovation code was one of the recommendations of Baroness Sharp's report A Dynamic Nucleus, AoC and members of the commission had a wider vision.

"It was hoped the project would allow colleges to meet a whole range of needs in the community, for example working with people who face mental health problems, or rough sleepers who may be otherwise excluded."

But, Mrs Mercer added: "However, this is a move in the right direction. This new system gives the flexibility to meet employment and skills needs in the community by developing a qualification after, rather than before, the learning begins.

"So, in this climate, it will be beneficial for students and colleges who are doing their best

to meet the needs of their economy in the locality.

"We see this as the first step toward colleges being able to respond to the needs of the communities within which they already play a crucial role."

Providers seeking to use the Code must be on the Agency's Register of Training Organisations and the provision needs to be delivered within their existing allocation; there is no additional funding for using the Code.

However, there is no formal application process, nor do providers need to seek permission to use the Code.

According to the Agency, the Code can be applied for up to 12 months and providers will need to work with an Ofqual-recognised awarding organisation, so the provision can be migrated onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

The 157 Group, although supportive of the Code, has questioned the funding mechanism.

A spokesperson said: "157 Group is fully supportive of any freedoms and flexibilities implemented to enable innovation to flourish within the sector. "However, it is unfortunate that funding can only be given

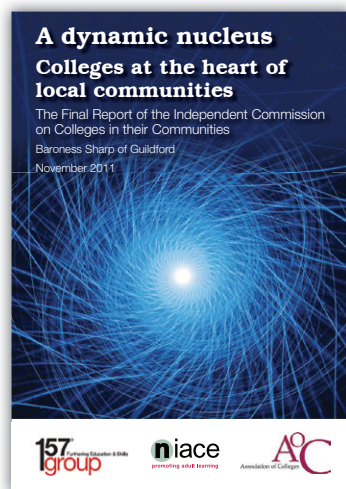
under the Code for qualifications that can be linked to the QCF."

David Hughes, chief executive of National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), said the Code will show how useful it can be to jobseekers.

He said: "We know there are colleges and providers already wanting to use this new flexibility.

"I was with a college recently who wanted to provide essential learning that local people needed to help them get jobs locally.

"We know that without the Code these people wouldn't have been able to access the learning they needed to get those jobs."



FE Week news in brief

Employers' concern

Employers are showing concerns about the damage to the reputation of apprenticeships, a study has revealed.

The independent survey was carried out on behalf of EAL, the specialist awarding organisation for industry qualifications. It polled 500 MDs and those responsible for HR and training at companies across engineering, manufacturing, building services, construction, energy and utilities, and environmental services.

A headline figure showed 57 per cent of employers are concerned about damage to the reputation of apprenticeship programmes. Meanwhile, 28.8 per cent were worried about the negative impact on the apprenticeships brand, with a further 28.6 per cent saying the damage has already been done.

For more, visit www.feweek.co.uk

SFA and NAS called

David Way, interim chief executive of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Geoff Russell, chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), will give evidence at the next session of an inquiry into apprenticeships.

The pair have been called on as witnesses by the Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee for the sixth evidence session, which will take place on April 26.

The session will be held in The Grimond Room of Portcullis House from 10:30am and is open to the public on a first come, first served basis. It will also be available online at www.parliamentlive.tv.

Tenders not named

The Department for Education (DfE) will not publish the providers invited to tender (ITT) for the 16/17 year-old element of the Youth Contract.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) said: "The reason given was they wished to avoid high volume of speculative contacts for subcontract work sent to bidders in the short window available in which to prepare their bidding documents."

Government to publish FE progression figures

Nick Reinis
@fenickr

Education destination measures for students entering and leaving FE will be published for the first time this summer.

The measures, due to be published in July, will show percentage of students progressing to further learning in a school, further education or sixth form college, apprenticeship or higher education institution.

The Department for Education (DfE) announced the move on their website on April 19, saying: "We have made it very clear that we want to put more information into the public domain so that parents and students can make informed choices about the performance of schools and colleges in their area.

"The destination measures will provide clear and comparable information on the success of schools and colleges in helping all their students take qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to progress.

"They will also encourage institutions to make sure their students receive the support needed to prepare for and complete the transition on to a positive sustained destination."

Two destination measures will be introduced, which will show the destinations of young people the year after they leave school or college.

The Key Stage 4 measure, according to the DfE, will be based on activity at academic age 16, the year after the young person left compulsory schooling, while the 16-18 measure will be based on activity in the year after learning at age 16-18.

The DfE said: "The measures will be based

on participation in all of the first two terms (defined as October to March) of the year after the young person left the institution.

"This will encourage schools and colleges to support and prepare their students to progress to a destination which offers sustained engagement. It is also the measurement period that is closest to the point at which the young person left their former institution and so is the point over which the institution has most influence."

However, this is only phase 1 of the project. For phase 2, the DfE will work on including the "more complex" employment destinations and, if the data is robust enough, they we aim to publish both education and employment destinations in Spring 2013.

The measures will be based on the data the DfE already receives and there will be no additional data collection required.

Hundreds register for Employer Ownership pilot

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Hundreds of registrations have been made for the first round of a multi-million pound Employer Ownership pilot - but not all are expected to make a bid.

Although the exact figure is not known, as a further analysis needs to be completed, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) told *FE Week* that they received more than 650 registrations for the initial £50 million pot.

The registered bidders, described as a "real cross section of large employers and SMEs in all sectors", have until midnight on April 26 to submit a full proposal, which not all of the registered bidders are expected to complete.

When asked if the Commission was pleased with the amount of registrations, a spokesperson for the UKCES said: "Yes, absolutely.

"However, this is only the first stage and

we do not anticipate that every registration will result in the submission of a full bid."

She added: "We didn't have a 'target' number.

"However, it's safe to say we're very pleased there seems to be a real appetite amongst employers for greater ownership of skills."

The pilot, jointly overseen by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Education and the UKCES, is designed to give businesses ability to judge the skills they need and was launched by the Prime Minister David Cameron in February.

The first phase of the pilot, funded directly by the government, will pay for projects which deliver skills development and vocational training, such as apprenticeships, from August 2012 to the end of July 2014. The total fund is worth up to £250 million over two years.

In return for greater flexibility in the design and delivery of publicly funded training, employers need to say how the pilot

will increase the impact of investment in workforce development.

Successful bids from small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) will receive a minimum investment of £250,000 from the government.

Meanwhile, large employers and enterprises, or those bidding as part of a consortium, will receive at least £1 million in comparison.

Tender documents, released in early March, outline how businesses can bid, including a particular emphasis on "ensuring a substantial and meaningful learning experience" for young people aged 16 to 18.

It later adds that proposals should include apprenticeships as a 'core element' alongside additional recruitment schemes such as work experience.

While the deadline for proposals closes next Thursday, it is understood the outcome of those bids is not expected to be known until July, as the Commission will need to undergo a selection process and a due diligence test.

However, while due diligence tests will be carried out, *FE Week* can reveal that winning projects will not be inspected by education regulator Ofsted.

The spokesperson for UKCES said: "Employer Ownership pilot projects will not be Ofsted inspected - Ofsted doesn't inspect pilots.

"The quality of the training will be measured by the outcome it delivers. This could be (amongst other things) the number of people entering employment; the number of good jobs created or the progression of individuals in the labour market.

"To be successful, bids will need to set out exactly how they will do this. This will form part of the assessment of the bid."

The spokesperson also confirmed that it is "too soon to say" if the projects will be inspected in the future, while an Ofsted spokesperson also added: "Ofsted is considering how it might inspect this arrangement in future."

Further instructions on the pilot are available online at www.ukces.org.uk

Holt review finds employers 'clueless' on apprenticeships

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

The businessman behind a review into apprenticeships has spoken of the "cluelessness" surrounding the programme among employers.

Jason Holt has been tasked by the government to take charge of an employer-led review into how businesses can be encouraged to hire an apprentice.

Mr Holt, chief executive of Holts Group of Companies, was given the role in early February and has since been gathering evidence from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about what the government can be doing to reduce bureaucracy and simplify the process for recruiting and training new apprentices.

In an update on the progress of his review, Mr Holt told *FE Week* that there are three areas that he is currently investigating.

He said: "One is very much around the issue of awareness from the employer point of view; there's a sense of cluelessness out there, which is unbelievable.

"Such as not being aware of what an apprenticeship is or where to begin in looking where to recruit an apprentice."

Mr Holt also said there is an issue with schools. He said: "They are focused on an academic route and the opportunities for apprenticeships aren't something that's clearly defined. However, engaging schools with colleges and employers is something that I'm looking to investigate."

The final area of investigation, he says, is "the process", adding: "Where's the best place to broker the marriage between an apprentice and an employer?

"Is it better at a local level or through the National Apprenticeship Service?"

Mr Holt also revealed that he is "getting to the

end of the evidence gathering phase now", but there is still time to submit views.

One of the ways Mr Holt is gathering evidence is through an online survey, which will stay open until the end of April.

He said: "The final phase is putting it together and testing recommendations with various business focus groups. So I'm beginning to form ideas, but they haven't been fully formed just yet."

The recommendations, Mr Holt expects, will go to ministers sometime in May.

Meanwhile, the government has revealed there is no current launch date for a separate employer-led review, which is due to assess quality of apprenticeships.

At the time of announcing Mr Holt's review in February, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills signalled the separate review would be "launched shortly", but no further announcement has been made.

A BIS spokesperson said: "It is important sufficient preparatory work is undertaken and that a suitable lead reviewer is secured, so as to ensure the review is as effective as possible. The review will take place alongside the extensive measures already undertaken and work currently underway to raise standards and improve quality of apprenticeships."

Although the final scope and terms of reference for the review will be announced when the review is launched, BIS has given an insight into how it could be formed.

The spokesperson added: "The broad purpose of the review will be to take a medium-long term look at the future of apprenticeship standards in England; aiming to identify best practice and ensure every apprenticeship delivers professionally recognised qualifications which employers need, to world class benchmarks, and ensure that government is maximising the impact of public investment in apprenticeships."



Upcoming Webinars

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Topic: Apprenticeship funding

Duration: Two hours

Cost: £95 + VAT

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Topic: Shadow funding calculations

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Date: Tuesday 8th May 2012 : 3pm

Topic: Apprenticeship funding

Duration: Two hours

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Lsect webinars delivered by Nick Linford, author of The hands-on guide to post-16 funding, Managing Director of Lsect & Managing Editor of FE Week

To sign up go online at: lsect.co.uk/webinars

FE Week investigates

NAS announces quality safeguard for ATAs

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has introduced a formal recognition process for Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs) in order to safeguard the quality of provision delivered under the model.

The new approval system, which has been developed in partnership with the Confederation of Apprenticeship Training Agencies (COATA), applies to all ATAs in England and requires that they operate in accordance with the ATA framework.

ATAs which fail to pass the recognition process by August will not be listed on the National Register of Approved ATAs, barring all colleges and training providers from entering a contract with them. Peter Pledger, chairman of COATA, told *FE Week*: “It’s really simple, you can’t operate without it.

“If you are an ATA you need a Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provider to pay to deliver and pay for the training.

“If at the end of the process you are not recognised, then no SFA funded provider can work with you.”

Until the end of August the recognition process does, however, allow organisations to operate for up to six months without recognition as an ‘ATA in Development’. The ATA Recognition Process guidance document, published by NAS, states: “There will be instances when a new organisation or one that is in the process of setting-up is not in a position to make a full application to become an Approved ATA.

“In these circumstances organisations are asked to register with NAS as an ‘ATA in Development’.

“The development phase can last for a maximum of six months and will allow the organisation time to set-up, develop their business model and operate as an ATA prior to full approval.”

In a traditional apprenticeship, an employer recruits a young person and then places them on an apprenticeship framework, taking on all of the employment responsibility and training them either in-house or with an independent training provider.

An ATA on the other hand employs the apprentice themselves, hiring them out to businesses with a management fee until they decide whether or not to recruit them full-time.

The training, however, is still delivered by a provider with a Skills Funding Agency (SFA) contract.

While the ATA model is new to the UK, it has been operating in Australia under the Group Training Organisations (GTO) system for more than 20 years.

The ATA model has proven particularly popular with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

“Some SMEs are reluctant to employ the apprentice themselves either because they’re worried about the HR risks or they’re worried about the hassle involved,” Mr Pledger said.

“They may not have ever employed 16 to 18 year olds, or even 19-24 year olds, and therefore the only way to persuade them to take on an apprentice is to step in and be the employer.”

Mr Pledger said the new recognition process was conceived by NAS to try and root out any unscrupulous businesses pretending to be ATAs.

“NAS were concerned about organisations coming to them to say they were ATAs,” Mr Pledger said.

“So the NAS knew about the ATAs that they had funded, but they were getting calls, on what I understand as a daily basis, from people saying we have an ATA and how do we work with you or how can we progress.”

He added: “Some of those ATAs, to be quite frank, were scams.”

Businesses were trying to scam NAS by using the ATA model as a front for a programme led apprenticeship, or by pretending to use a host



His Royal Highness, The Duke of York launched the COATA on Monday February 6th.

business when there was none at all.

“There was a whole range of other mechanisms just to simply extract training funding from the NAS for programmes that simple weren’t apprenticeships,” Mr Pledger said.

The new recognition process was launched during the Easter break, however the NAS are unable to promote or comment on the launch due to the pre-election period, known as ‘purdah’. Paul Coxhead, chief executive of the Logistics Apprenticeship Training Academy (LATA), said the new recognition process “all makes sense”.

“It is all about quality, it’s about what we want at the end at the end of this,” Mr Coxhead told *FE Week*.

“It’s not just quality for the employers so they get quality people, its quality for the kids so they’re getting something which is meaningful, which is going to carry them through.”

The recognition process follows the ATA framework released by the NAS on April 2, which lists the key behaviours associated with an ATA, such as how to engage properly with apprentices, host employers and training

providers.

Ashley Langdon, chief executive of Impact Apprenticeships, says while he thinks the framework and recognition process is “a great move forward”, he has concerns about who the framework and recognition process will be monitored by.

Mr Langdon said: “I have some questions as far as the overall on-going policing of it.

“Obviously NAS local directors which we work with will visit regularly and all the rest of it, but I’ll be interested to see how they actually audit and police practitioners that are operating ATAs.”

Mr Pledger says because ATAs are independent organisations and not directly funded by the NAS, even with the framework it’s very difficult to monitor and protect the ATA brand.

“All we will do is say you are not recognised by COATA and the NAS if you don’t meet our framework,” Mr Pledger said.

“What you do with your own money and your own resources are entirely up to you, but we won’t work with you and the SFA won’t fund providers to work with you either.”

Does the ATA model need a makeover?

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The ATA model was criticised by Tom Wilson, director of unionlearn at the House of Commons last week.

Mr Wilson, speaking at an evidence session held by the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee, said it wasn’t “a genuine employment relationship” for the apprentice.

“It’s a device which is being used to create the impression of an employment relationship and that’s frankly in our view something which is, antithetical to the fundamental idea of what an apprenticeship is all about,” Mr Wilson said.

“Which is you work with an employer, not a group of employers, and that that employer, when you complete the apprentice takes you on

ideally and gives you a full time job.”

He added: “The ATA model is much more like an agency, frankly.”

Mr Wilson later added that the ATA model was damaging the apprenticeship brand.

“We’ve got so many examples that we’ve come across through our networks with unions of ATAs which provide frankly not very good quality, not all, some are better than others, absolutely, but we have many, many examples where the ATA model has not served apprenticeships all that well,” Mr Wilson said.

“They may have achieved the apprenticeship but they’ve then not actually got a job afterwards, or the quality of their training was not all that great, or in effect what they’ve been doing is working for an employer, not a group of employers, in the same way as if that employer frankly could have taken them on properly as we would have argued they should anyway.”

Martin Doel, chief executive of the Asso-



Martin Doel (left) and Tom Wilson at the BIS Select Committee hearing last week. Taken from Parliament TV

ciation of Colleges (AoC), defended the ATA model and said they had “a really strong role to play here with SMEs”.

“I think there is a very powerful model which was setup as a concept two years ago,” Mr Doel said.

“We’re clearly in the process of learning what makes it work and work in the best way,

in terms of regulation and, we’re perhaps not there with sharing best practices and oversight in order to continue to improve the model... but I do think there is a role for Group Training Associations (GTA) and ATAs, particularly for small employers.”

Mr Doel added: “I think it is a very persuasive offer and a very useful model to use.”

FE Week profile

Ruth Spellman ~ her story

Rhian Jones

@JonesJournor

The new chief executive of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) talks to FE Week

With no previous background in education, Ruth Spellman says she isn't the most obvious candidate for the job of chief executive of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

But she comes to the role - her fourth CEO position - with 40 years of management experience under her belt. And as the first female chief executive of the Association in its 108 year history, she hopes to be able to use that, and her own experience of how education can change people's lives, to shape the future of the organisation.

The fourth of six girls, Spellman says she led her three younger sisters into "all sorts of trouble".

"I said 'what do you mean it behoves women not to wear trouser suits?' He said 'we don't like it and we don't allow it' "

Instead of following in the footsteps of her older sisters, who were both educated at girls' schools, she went to a mixed comprehensive, which is where her dad liked to joke that 'the rot set in', "You know how kids ask why? Apparently I did it to a ridiculous extent and drove everybody crazy," she says .

Spellman put her natural curiosity to good use, excelling academically at school and winning a place at Cambridge University to study Economics - which wasn't all that common in the town of Pontypool, in South Wales, where she grew up.

Her lecturer father (who later became a college principal) was determined for his daughters to be successful and make the most of any opportunities that came their way.

"He was very keen for us to not just be content to swim along, but to actually maximise our talents and abilities," she recalls. "I do remember him saying 'the biggest waste of all would be to waste your talent'."

A "mousey" teenager who loved reading, the young Spellman had her sights on a career in politics and, eventually, a ministerial role. But she is glad she chose

not to pursue her political ambitions, she says.

If her 40 years in business have taught her one thing, it is that MPs are not as influential as it seems. "You can be a backbench MP and not really influence anything...but knowing a lot of people in the relevant departments and working on policy issues - that way, you can influence things and make things happen and that's pretty much where I have focused my attentions and efforts."

She was very aware - from a very early age - that having a fulfilling career was important to her. She recalls: "I didn't want to just get married and have kids. I was very aware of women and girls who didn't achieve their potential and there was a general appreciation that it was only by using your brains that you could really change your social class."

But it didn't take her long to work out that women can have a much tougher time climbing the career ladder. While she enjoyed the role, Spellman left her first job at the National Coal Board after realising she wasn't going to be offered the opportunities she was looking for because "basically the only people that got promoted in the mining industry were people with mining engineering degrees and men in general".

And during the decade she spent working at the National Economic Development Office - whilst bringing up three small children - she became acutely aware that her gender could be the reason she hadn't been "tapped on the shoulder" for promotions as other colleagues had. "I am pretty sure that was because I had children and it was regarded as unsuitable for me."

She recalls one particular episode, in the late 1980s, when a senior colleague asked her to stop wearing trousers to work. "I said 'what do you mean it behoves women not to wear trouser suits?' He said 'we don't like it and we don't allow it'," she says, crossly.

"I was very aware of women and girls who didn't achieve their potential and there was a general appreciation that it was only by using your brains that you could really change your social class "

But her hard work has not gone unrecognised. Having also held senior roles at the NSPCC, Investors in People and the Chartered Management Institute, Spellman was awarded an OBE for services to workplace learning in 2007.



"I like to think it's because I made a difference," she says. "Some people object in principle to honours but I have to admit I didn't...I just went for it."

Her tenacity, and her ability to stand her ground is, at least partly, the result of endless family debates around the dinner table, she says.

"I was taught really to articulate my views and express myself and I found that fantastic.

"I used to really love debates because I like the whole business of you can't prove someone right or wrong and you have also got to understand the other person's point of view.

"I think that trying to see it from the other person's point of view is very important and whichever job I have done, I have always

tried to think that actually, not everybody will see it in the same way, so what I have tried to do is to win consensus and to get a belief in what we are doing."

It is a skill she hopes to put to good use in her new role at the WEA, she says, and her vision is of an organisation that gives a lot more back to its members. "It would be great to see the WEA offering more through an e-membership proposition through e-learning opportunities for people in their own homes.

"I'd also like to see schools open at weekends for adults. It's a charity with a difference and the job just ticks a lot of boxes for me. It's a challenge and I think my expertise and background will bring a slightly different flavour to the organisation."

FE Week Experts

Why Barnfield College is seeking private investment



Barnfield College is considering seeking private equity investment and maximising the new FE financial freedoms to further enhance our focus on providing an excellent education and training system, which offers students the most choice and best support to ensure success in the future.

By changing our legal form to being a company limited by guarantee there could be greater financial flexibility as the company limited by guarantee could possibly establish a subsidiary, a company limited by shares, which could then seek investment and make a surplus.

Firm plans for the spending of any private investment are yet to be confirmed, however, there are multiple options which include increasing the size of the college, expanding commercial income generation activities, as well as improving facilities across the Federation.

Financial backing is being investigated from both banks and private equity investors, but we are focusing more closely on private equity investors as they too would bring their own ideas, commercial expertise and greater support.

The possible change in status will not result in any increased course fees, if anything I am looking to find ways to reduce costs and ensure access for all. Fees are currently prohibitive to many students seeking an education - so wouldn't it be perfect to remove such barriers?

I am certain the students in the classroom would see no difference other than improvements.

Any surplus generated would be shared between further investment, the college staff

and the equity investor, in a manner similar to the John Lewis model. The staff as shareholders would therefore own the college and would be rewarded accordingly for success.

Public funds and assets, such as the college itself, would be protected by the company limited by guarantee and the charitable trust would not be impacted. I am excited about the development opportunities this model will bring. Standing still is the same as going backwards and Barnfield is about moving forwards, creating great schools, offering more choice and widening access for all.

The Federations improvement strategy has been based round the five strategic principles that reflect how we operate - all of which was initially born from the college as sponsor:

- Positive thinking - raising aspiration and not accepting excuses for poor performance;
- The critical essentials - having the right people doing the right things;
- The critical non-essentials - these are the things that will take you from good to great;
- Enjoyment and opportunity for staff and students; and
- No compromise on standards - raise the bar (particularly in relation to leadership, teaching and learning, monitoring and behaviour).

Barnfield has always been about being entrepreneurial and the consideration to turn company status reflects our constant drive to improve standards at outcomes. In September 2011, we continued our leading ways by being the first FE College to sponsor a Free School.

The Federation is now led by the Barnfield Education Partnership Trust - members of the Federation include Barnfield College (16 years upwards), Barnfield South and West Academies (11-18 years), the country's first FE sponsored Studio School (14-18 years enterprise academy) and of course our most recent addition - Barnfield Moorlands Free School.

I have always embraced freedoms and change and it is for the benefit of every student within the college and all of these academies that I want to find new ways of adding even more value to their experience at Barnfield. And, also, to empower staff even further to realise the wonderful impact their teaching has on our students and to be rewarded and celebrated for the work that they do.

Finally, this is only one of several options being explored by the college board and still in the early stages of development. Once it is more firmed up, appropriate consultation will take place.

*Pete Birkett Chief Executive,
Barnfield Federation.*

Ofsted report highlights profound contradictions

For anyone who wishes to gain insight into profound contradictions underlying current government thinking on the curriculum, I can highly recommend the Ofsted best practice report 'Apprenticeships for Young People'.

This informative report, published earlier this month, is based on the work of 15 providers that are highly successful in delivering apprenticeships to young people.

Among the conclusions it draws are the following:

- It recognises that 'young people who had previous experience of vocational training were more successful in making good progress with their apprenticeship framework than those starting straight from school without it.'
- There is a strong emphasis on the value of work experience for school students and the report comments on the incompatibility of this with a GCSE based curriculum. It says: 'Employers saw successful work experience at school as an important factor.'
- The report places a strong emphasis on the importance of employability skills: 'Most of the providers or employers did not see pre-entry qualifications such as GCSEs as a deciding factor in choosing applicants.'
- It makes a strong case for all school students to have access to high quality impartial careers guidance.
- It presents some examples of schools discouraging 'bright' pupils from ending their general education at 16 to pursue apprenticeships.

Recommendations to government and schools included the following:

- Improve the national availability of careers guidance on post-16 options so that young people can make informed and independent choices about their education and training
- Improve the local coordination of work experience so that willing employers can respond to more requests for such experience across a wider time-frame

Now, contrast this with some of the Department for Education's policy announcements in the last 12 months:

- Accepting the Wolfe report recommendations that all 14-16 year olds spend no more than 20 per cent of time on vocational subjects
- Cutting £200 million from the national careers budget and replacing a face-to-face Connexions service with a telephone line and website
- Removing the requirement for schools to provide careers education and work experience - and more significantly placing the burden for funding work experience on schools
- Giving the National Curriculum Review a remit that focuses on knowledge and



academic subjects rather than employability skills

- Drastically cutting the number of vocational qualifications that count in school league tables

Considering concerns about Ofsted's lack of independence from government have been expressed in a number of places, including ASCL's annual conference in March, it is encouraging to see Ofsted draw its own evidence-based conclusions, especially as the recommendations chime with many of the surveys of what employers look for when taking on new recruits.

More importantly, it throws up important questions for future policy development.

- Since potential employers clearly see the value of vocational courses for pupils aged 14-16, does the apprenticeships report not present a strong case against their marginalisation in the curriculum?
- This report reflects the desire consistently expressed by employers for young people to leave school with a range of employability skills. Therefore should these not be at the heart of the national curriculum?
- How does the government square the conclusion in the report with the decision to remove the requirement on schools to provide careers education or work experience?
- Does the accountability framework, including the proposed destinations measure, value schools which guide pupils onto apprenticeships as well as towards higher education?
- Why has the provision of careers advice for school age pupils been left to individual schools when the case for national and local coordination is so clear in this report?

I am just asking...

*Brian Lightman, General Secretary,
Association of School and College Leaders*

FE Week Experts

Government could erode professionalism in FE



Like many practitioners and leaders in the further education and skills sector, I am extremely concerned that proposals recently made to the government could erode the professional status of the teachers and trainers in further education and, over time, the quality of education delivered in FE.

Lord Lingfield's interim report on professionalism recommends that initial teacher training (ITT) should be optional for new teachers and trainers entering the sector, who would need to gain only a preparatory award as part of an induction process in their first job. Being a qualified teacher would be optional.

Most teachers and trainers enter the sector from non-teaching backgrounds in commerce and industry, and are currently required

to attain ITT qualifications and Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status. The interim report recommends revoking the 2007 regulations that require this.

But a detailed report on research carried out for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), 'Evaluation of FE Teachers Qualifications (England) Regulations 2007', presents evidence of considerable gains under the current system.

More than three million people receive education and training through the English FE system each year. Learners range from young people studying vocational courses, GCSEs or A levels, and adults receiving specialised training in the workplace, to some of the most vulnerable people in society, including those with learning difficulties, young and adult offenders, and those for whom education had previously been a closed book.

So, let me ask:

1. Do we, as a society, believe that the FE teachers serving this vast and diverse group deserve less professional training and support and a lower professional status?
2. Is it right for vulnerable young people and adults to be taught by unqualified teachers? And what will young people and parents think of this?
3. Should our engineers, accountants, technicians, mechanics, plumbers, chefs, healthcare and social workers of the future be taught by teachers who may know their subject

or vocation well, but have not been through robust ITT processes to give them a thorough grounding in practice and theory?

Schoolteachers have to undertake ITT and afterwards gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Persistent lobbying by the FE sector, most notably by the Institute for Learning (IfL), led to the government accepting Professor Wolf's recommendation that the equivalent post-qualification professional status of QTLS should have parity with QTS for teaching in a school. This became law on April 1.

As the professional body, IfL is determined that our members should continue to benefit from this hard-fought parity of status being recognised.

So far, nearly 10,000 teachers in our sector have attained QTLS status through professional formation, conferred by IfL. Some already teach in school and FE settings, and the increasing trend for colleges to sponsor or form partnerships with schools and academies means there should be more opportunities for FE teachers to provide 14 to 19-year-olds with the high-quality vocational education that our economy clearly needs.

Lord Lingfield's report points to the unregulated nature of teaching in higher education as a possible model for the future development of FE teaching. But academics in HE are teaching students who have achieved at least a level 3 qualification - a far cry from the

diverse range of abilities that an FE teacher typically faces.

I strongly believe that it is in the public and national interest for FE teachers to have ITT, enshrined in law, rather than being left to the discretion of individual employers and the year-in, year-out changes inherent in annual national funding agreements with colleges and providers. School pupils are protected by law, as are people seeking medical help, financial services and legal help. So should FE students not be afforded the right - by law - to be taught by qualified teachers?

I cannot accept that, as a society, we are prepared to allow a situation where teaching and learning in FE requires no ITT beyond a standard induction for new entrants to teaching. To do so would send out the worst kind of message about the standing, status and quality of education offered in FE and do little for the professional prestige and career chances of the people tasked with delivering it.

Further education plays an indispensable role in improving the life chances and career opportunities of millions of people, to the benefit of the UK economy and our society. I think it deserves the highest professional standards, starting with mandatory ITT, and urge the government to resist calls for this to be sacrificed.

Toni Fazaeli, Chief Executive, Institute for Learning



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FE Week gets technical

On Monday 16th April a total of 194 colleges and training providers completed the Lsect online survey. The numerical results are published here in full, including some of the comments.

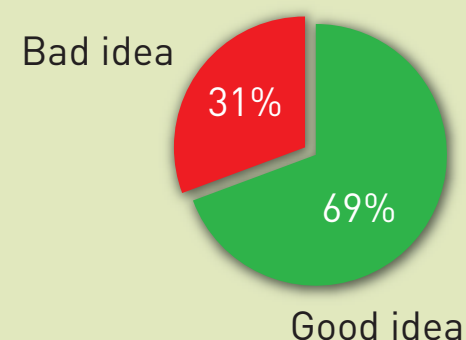
What do you think of the introduction of a 12 month minimum duration for 16-18 year-olds?

Very good idea	109	56%
Quite good idea	57	29%
Not sure	7	4%
Bad idea	18	9%
Very bad idea	3	2%



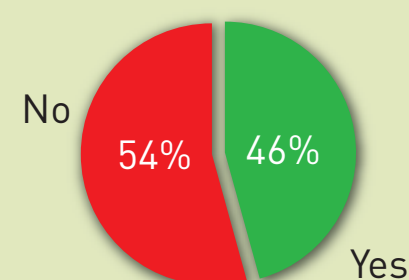
What do you think of the introduction of a 12 month minimum duration for 19+ year-olds?

Very good idea	43	22%
Quite good idea	70	36%
Not sure	31	16%
Bad idea	42	22%
Very bad idea	8	4%



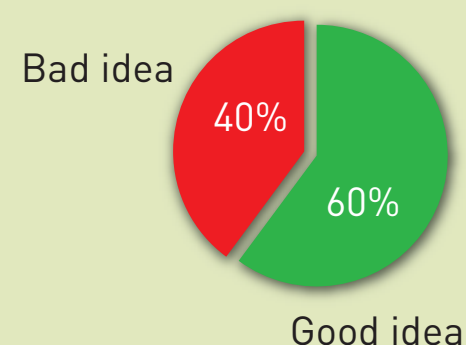
Do you think the rapid 25+ apprenticeship growth is a good thing?

Yes	64	33%
No	76	39%
Not sure	54	28%



What do you think of the idea of a minimum employer fee for 19+ apprenticeships?

Very good idea	40	21%
Quite good idea	49	25%
Not sure	46	24%
Bad idea	40	21%
Very bad idea	19	10%



Mark Connolly, Apprenticeships Contract Team Leader, Kirklees College said it was a **very good idea**

"To help ensure development not just assessment. Also to maintain credibility with employers, many of whom already question the duration compared to their own 'time-served' experience of old style apprenticeships. Apprentices need time to not just acquire new skills but embed them and develop in the job. 16-18s in particular develop and mature a great deal and need time to practice and hone their skills."

Simon Bozzoli, Managing Director, Future Un-Limited said it was a **very bad idea**

"The minimum duration has been introduced because of a failure of the SFA to monitor its contracts effectively. Our apprenticeships can be effectively delivered over a 6 to 8 month period (business administration) and 80% of those completing them then progress onto a 12 month level 3 apprenticeship. Forcing providers to deliver long duration apprenticeships will reduce the level of support we are able to provide (less frequent employer visits and assessments) to apprentices in the crucial initial 6 month period of the training programme."

Paul Allford, Funding & Curriculum Manager, National Construction College (ConstructionSkills) said it was a **very good idea**

"You might be able to carry out the technical learning but would lack the experience and a completed apprenticeship implies competence."

John O' Donnell, Employer Responsive Director, Wigan & Leigh College said it was a **very good idea**

"Will help to stop the 12 week "apprenticeships" that give the brand a really bad name and hopefully force out some of the providers that are just in it for the money."

Keith Horan, Distance Learning Support Manager, NTQUK said it was a **very bad idea**

"Whilst I can see the thought behind it, I feel that each adult brings a different set of skills to their apprenticeship. Not all of these can be measured as Recognition of Prior Learning. The learner and provider may be disadvantaged/penalised for having an existing skill base."

Breda Leyne, Learning and Development Consultant, Cogito Development Projects said this is **not a good thing**

"Because I agree it is Train to Gain re-badged. No aversion to employers training staff to level 2 but it has been at the expense of new entrants to workplace."

Clements Philip, Employer Engagement Manager, Warwickshire College is **not a good thing**

"Apprenticeships should be all about training young people and helping them to improve and advance. There should be training opportunities for 25+ but not generally as an apprentice. Numbers should be rebalanced towards majority being from the 16-18 group."

Linda Martin, Development Director, HIT Training Ltd thinks that it is a **good thing**

"Why would it be a bad thing - surely upskilling of a workforce is a good thing regardless of age. In many sectors the average age of the workforce will be in the late twenties - mid thirties, so not to include this age range is curtailing opportunities to all for lifelong learning."

Ian Nash, Partner, Nash&Jones Partnership said it was a **very good idea**

"In my research across eight OECD countries in the late 1990s, all countries except the UK set strict financial requirements on employers. UK employers have got used to expecting cash to come from government."

Andy Daw, Assistant Principal Employer Engagement, Kingston Maurward College said it was a **very good idea**

"Clarity of message - that is of course all apprenticeships have a value to an employer - if there was some parity that might be useful"

Linda Martin, Development Director, HIT Training Ltd said it is a **very bad idea**

"Employers are under considerable economic pressure and the timing of any fees needs to be considered. Medium term and with a clear introduction and timeframe into fee the concept may have validity. There needs to be recognition of a significant culture change required from employers - when you have had free training for a period of time the move to fee paying needs to be staged"

FE Week campus round-up



Truro and Penwith College apprenticeship event gets visit from The Apprentice winner

A major apprenticeship event at Truro and Penwith College featured The Apprentice winner Lee McQueen who gave a fast paced and motivational speech.

This special meeting of the college's Cornwall Business Club was compered by Daphne Skinnard from BBC Radio Cornwall.

More than 180 business people from all over the county attended the event held at Truro College's Fal Building.

Apprentices organised and hosted the event, with 12 studying their Professional Cookery

framework at The Seafood Restaurant making and serving fabulous canapés.

The college's principal David Walrond said: "It was a great success in terms of the levels of interest and engagement from businesses and the quality of the discussions, including the many informal networking conversations that surrounded the presentations.

"We want more and more businesses to take on board the idea of employing apprentices and the feedback from this evening is really encouraging."

Walsall College students have a laugh with Lenny Henry at performing arts workshop



It certainly was a laughing matter when comedian Lenny Henry held a workshop with Performing Arts students at Walsall College.

It was aimed to help him finalise the script for his latest play, which will be performed as part of the National Theatre's Connections festival.

The workshop was organised by the National Theatre following the success of last year's New Connections Festival, where Walsall College students were one of only 10 groups selected to perform, from 500 institutions that applied.

Lecturer Kerry Downing, said: "We have developed an excellent working relationship with the National Theatre, as a result of the hard work and dedication shown by students in their performance last year.

"It was an incredible and very rewarding opportunity for our students to work with an established artist like Lenny Henry, and to also put their ideas forward for his consideration."

Lenny Henry said: "The students were very forthcoming in the workshop and it was great to hear their opinions about the play, as well as the general issues affecting younger people in today's society."

Havering College praised for Olympic show



London 2012 chief Lord Sebastian Coe praised the cast of the Havering College Inspiration show for getting involved in the Cultural Olympiad.

Three thrilled teenagers - Tristan Embleton, Matt Latimer and Sam Loughlin - were selected to represent the college when Lord Coe visited Hornchurch Sports Centre.

The event organised by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and Havering Council was an opportunity for Lord Coe to meet young people inspired by the Olympics.

The welcome group included divers from

Havering Cormorants Diving Club, potential 2016 athletes, 2012 ambassadors, Mascot Dancers, winners of the borough's Talented 30 scheme plus Havering College students ahead of their performance at the London Palladium.

Tristan, Matt and Sam, who are National Diploma Music Performance students, make up rock band Dead Baby Birds.

Lord Coe said: "This is really the living testimony as to why we all set off on this journey something like ten years ago now with the dream that we might bring the Olympic Games home locally for the first time after 64 years."



Chesterfield College students measure up

Construction students have linked with the town's iconic church to measure how much the crooked spire has moved during the past year.

The Chesterfield College students have been taking measurements since the early 1970's to help with the church's monitoring process.

They carried out this year's orientation survey using the latest in theodolite laser technology to see how far the spire had moved in any direction.

Setting up a triangular laser from the base of the spire inside the church to outside in the church's courtyard, right up to the tip of the spire, the students were able to work exactly how much the spire has moved.

As in recent years, the spire has only experienced minimal movement, a little over 10mm, within the safety limits.

City of Bath College stonemasons help restore local mansion



Trainee stonemasons from City of Bath College are continuing to play a key role in the restoration of Woodchester Mansion.

The most recent contributions to the long-term restoration project at the 19th century Victorian Gothic property are two Medieval-style grotesques.

One was carved for display inside the visitors' area of the mansion so the public can view the old and the new side by side, while the other has been installed on the apex of the mansion.

The new carvings are 'hunky punks' - a term given to grotesque stone figures carved to ornament corners and break up straight sections of stonemasonry.

They were carved by stonemasonry students Sam Flintham and Phil Windley.

Sam said: "I was inspired to create the carving by a badly weathered monkey grotesque which was removed from the top of the west gable at Woodchester Mansion."

Barnet and Southgate College football stars



Two lucky football students at Barnet and Southgate College met first team players from Tottenham Hotspur at an exciting event.

The football students, Ryah Vyse (19) and Siobhan Wilson (17) both recently qualified for the BCS (British Colleges Sports) Ladies England squad; the national team recently played against and beat Wales to win the coveted Anglo Welsh Shield. As well as playing for the BCS team, Ryah also plays for Middlesex County and Tottenham Hotspur Ladies first team, she has been with the club since she was 10 years old and Siobhan also plays for

Tottenham Hotspur Ladies under 21's team.

The event was held to congratulate the girls and raise awareness of the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation's (THF) Education and Football Development Centre programme in conjunction with Barnet and Southgate College.

The girls met with the club's first team squad and even practiced alongside the likes of Gareth Bale and Louis Saha (picture).

College principal David Byrne said: "Ryah and Siobhan have demonstrated that investing in hard work and training really does pay off."

Tameside College student's flash of brilliance



Tameside College photography student Catherine Burgess has won first place in an Olympic themed competition.

Catherine, who is currently studying for a BTEC National Extended Diploma in

Photography, spotted the competition on a poster and thought she'd give it a go.

The competition, known as 'Image 12', is an annual photography competition open to high school and college students within Tameside.

Catherine enlisted the help of a fellow art and design student, Hannah Doherty, to model for the photograph.

Catherine's photograph is currently being displayed at the Portland Basin Museum Art Gallery, in Ashton-under-Lyne, and forming the borough's version of the national touring exhibition Our Sporting Life.

She said: "I was extremely happy to have won the competition and to see my own work exhibited in a gallery. Studying at Tameside College has equipped me with the skills and confidence to take photography further."

Myerscough College Golf Academy wins British Colleges Sport Open Championship



Myerscough College's Golf Academy has won the British Colleges Sport Open Golf Championship for the second year running.

They recorded victories in the team and individual competitions at the BCS Open Golf Championship at The National Golf Centre, in Woodhall Spa. Head PGA Golf Professional at the college Craig Lea praised his young students for producing one of the Academy's

finest performances to date.

He said: "The student's hard work and consistent effort in embracing both the practice and skill development elements of our coaching structure has led to excellent progression in their golf game this year.

"The success they are achieving at both team and individual level is well deserved and is testament to their dedication."



There's Gecko-mania at Sparsholt College

There are three new additions to Sparsholt College's animal management collection following the successful breeding of their Crested Geckos. Three eggs were incubated and hatched to produce the tiny lizards which have proved an instant hit with staff and learners alike.

The Animal Management Centre at the College houses three adult Crested Gecko's which consist of the breeding pair and one lone male. The hope is that the newly arrived baby Geckos will turn out to be female (currently too young to sex) so they can be

introduced to the lone male to hopefully produce more eggs.

Native to New Caledonia, the Crested Gecko (*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*) was thought to be extinct until it was re-discovered in 1994. Despite this relatively recent discovery, the Crested Gecko has been extensively bred by breeders and as a result is now one of the most commonly kept pet species of lizard.

The baby Geckos will join the 600+ animals from over 100 species the College has on site to provide practical training for their Animal Management and Veterinary Nursing students.

Eggs-perts at Stratford-upon-Avon College



Catering students at Stratford-upon-Avon College were treated to a visit from expert chocolatiers Barry Callebaut.

One of the world's leading manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate products, Barry Callebaut sent an expert to help students make some spectacular Easter eggs.

Each student produced the same template egg but were then given free range to decorate the chocolate oval with any design they liked.

There were a mixture of milk and white chocolate eggs and they were placed on a base made up of coloured chocolate chips.

New College Nottingham students receive standing ovation for musical performance



Musical Theatre students at New College Nottingham (ncn) received a standing ovation for their final performance of On Broadway.

We Will Rock You, West Side Story, Fiddler on the Roof, Gypsy, Cabaret and Jekyll and Hyde were just some of the famous Broadway shows included in the performance.

Lecturer Louisa Homes, said: "Preparing for the production enabled students to build on their skills in singing, acting, dancing and technical theatre.

"The shows received an excellent turnout and the standing ovation was testament to the students' hard work and commitment."

FE Week events...

Witnesses say look again at employer fees

Nick Summers

@SummerNicholas

Apprenticeship funding rates and employer contributions were two of the biggest issues raised by Martin Doel, chief executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC), at an evidence session held by the Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee for their inquiry into apprenticeships last week.

Mr Doel, speaking at the Houses of Parliament alongside Tom Wilson, director of unionlearn, said he was particularly concerned with the reduced funding rates for apprentices aged between 18 and 24, as well as the number of businesses offering none of their own investment.

"With the presumed 50 per cent contribution from employers - which is not a cash contribution but can be handed in kind - and the tendency for providers to be led into a process of undercutting each other below that presumed 50 per cent contribution from the employer...that must be, I think, an incipient threat of quality," Mr Doel said.

The AoC chief executive said the further education sector, including the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), needed to "get to grips" with the issue quickly.

However, he later added it wasn't as simple as introducing mandatory match funding, equivalent to a 50 per cent contribution from the employer.

"We need to pause and think about the most effective way to see that funding rates are effective," Mr Doel told the Committee.

He also suggested looking again at the "Independent review of fees and co-funding in Further Education in England", carried out by Christopher Banks CBE in July 2010, which encouraged co-investment from individuals and employers in conjunction with the quality and responsiveness of provision.

"It would be good to return to some of that thinking in this particular area," Mr Doel said.

"Otherwise I think a couple of things would happen, either quality would be affected or some providers will begin to say, I can't deliver at the rates employers are prepared to pay for this, so I just won't do it.

"I can only for a certain period of time cross subsidise it from my other work, and then you'll have a flattening off of opportunities for 18-24 apprenticeships because providers can't deliver at the quality and the rate of providers."

The Committee asked Mr Wilson if the issue of employer contributions was linked to concerns about deadweight; the idea that the government was funding vocational training which would have occurred regardless.

"Oh yeah, absolutely," Mr Wilson said quickly.

The idea of deadweight has come to the fore since the apprenticeship programme at



Martin Doel, Chief Executive of the AoC and Tom Wilson, Director of Unionlearn and TUC giving evidence to the committee

Morrisons, delivered by Elmfield Training, was questioned on a BBC One Panorama programme last month, entitled "The Great Apprentice Scandal".

Mr Wilson said: "The kind of practice which was revealed by Panorama was broadly at the margins, but I would add it can very quickly become a major problem.

"Even if it is at the margins, if that is something that you're competitor is getting away with, then you've got to do the same otherwise you're going to get driven out of business.

"In my view it's out of control and that's disadvantaging 16-24 year-olds"

"So you have to kind of deal with it very quickly and effectively, to stop it spreading from the margins."

He later added: "On the deadweight point yes, I think the issues around Train to Gain and the 50 per cent the National Audit Office (NAO) found were real and those are big issues for us."

A significant theme from the evidence session was the pressure on the NAS to deliver both quality and quantity in equal measure

Mr Wilson suggested that NAS had in fact done both by ensuring good quality was delivered first.

"NAS perhaps have suffered a bit from a sense that quality and quantity have been

slightly opposed to each other and that the one is pursued at the expense of the other," Mr Wilson said.

"Actually that is the opposite of the truth.

"I think NAS' greatest success in more recent times has been because it pursued quality as much as quantity, thereby assuring employers that this is not some kind of cheap second rate qualification."

Mr Doel added that the growth in new apprentices was "not to be sneered at", although there was still more that could be done by NAS.

He said: "Quality I think is an abiding concern for all of us, to actually continue to have growth with quality and I think that the NAS needs to think in those regards."

The NAS holds a dual role both as a marketing arm for apprenticeships as well as a regulatory body.

Adrian Bailey MP, chairman of the Committee, asked the pair whether they felt there was any conflict of interest between these two opposing functions.

Mr Doel responded: "There is a potential conflict and there needs to be very clear accountabilities within the agency, as well as externally, about which people are responsible for quality, for auditing the actual quality of provision and which of those are responsible for actually marketing and generating the demand in the first place."

He added there should be "some internal checks and balances" in NAS to make sure the conflict of interest didn't manifest itself.

Mr Wilson said he agreed entirely with the AoC chief executive.

"There are two clear distinct roles, and perhaps there needs to be much a clearer, public articulation of where those two roles are organised within NAS and the way in which they work," Mr Wilson said.

Unionlearn, the learning and skills organisation of the TUC, supports more than 220,000 learners, including apprentices, and has trained more than 22,000 union learning representatives.

The Committee were keen to ask Mr Wilson whether union involvement had an effect on employer engagement and the quality of delivery.

"Our experience is that where unions are involved, employers report twice as much take up and interest, satisfaction and quality and progression amongst their apprentices," Mr Wilson told the Committee.

"Similarly the apprentices themselves, who are members of course, report to us that they're much more likely to get a high quality level of training than were they working in a company which isn't union recognised."

He added: "So we're strongly of course of the view where there is union involvement and engagement and presence, that is a real parcel force for good, and that has been recognised I think from top to bottom across the entire system."

The Committee asked Mr Doel if further education colleges could play a similar role in protecting the quality of the apprenticeship programme.

"Colleges are in their community for the long term," Mr Doel said.

"They have no interest or benefit from actually providing low quality apprenticeships either to the individuals or to employers, because their reputations depend on long term relationships.

"They're not for profit and therefore they're not in it to make a buck, they're in it to serve their communities and through what is a very strong and I think actually very impressive way of learning while you're working."



The BIS Select Committee hearing evidence last week



Adrian Bailey, MP chairs the BIS Select Committee

Nick Linford, managing editor of *FE Week* and managing director of Lsect

The debate was quickly followed by a second session which called on Nick Linford, managing editor of *FE Week* and managing director of Lsect to give evidence publicly to the Committee.

Mr Linford said that while the government had been “incredibly successful” in boosting the number of apprenticeship starts, they had also “lost control” of the growth in new apprentices aged 25 and above.

“The Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the body that actually pays for these courses - or the experiences as I call them - I think is getting quite nervous about the significant growth on 25+,” Mr Linford said.

He later added: “The numbers that we’ve seen this year show, in my view, that the government have lost control actually of the significant growth on 25+. The numbers this year show more than 100,000 just in the first half of this year for 25+.

“That’s a 45 per cent increase on the same period last year.”

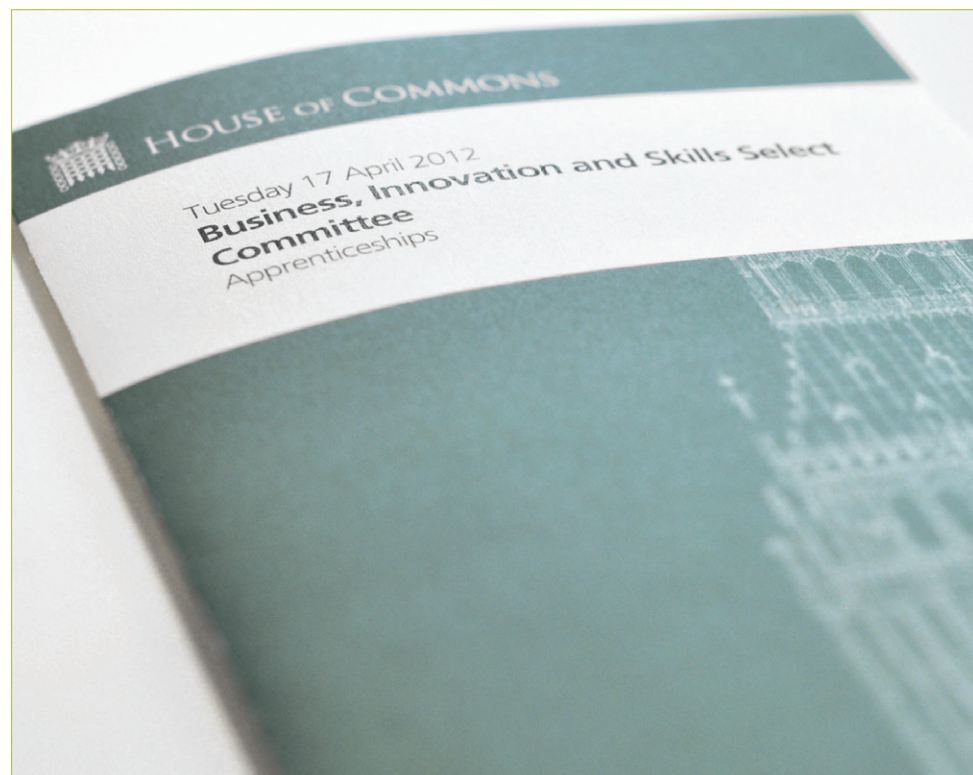
The editor of *FE Week* then quoted from a briefing note published by the SFA on March 12.

It reads: “We expect to see a greater focus on the recruitment of young people aged 19 to 24, rather than a maintenance of current recruitment levels for those aged over 25.

“This will be supported by the roll-out of the new incentive payment for employers recruiting apprentices aged under 25 years.”

It later adds: “To support this policy, we will monitor the pattern and volume of 25+ Apprenticeship delivery in-year and will not award any growth for 25+ Apprenticeship provision.”

Mr Linford said this echoed a previous document published by the SFA in June last year.



“We have not been able to agree at this time any additional funding for new 25+ Apprenticeship starts,” it reads.

Mr Linford told the Committee: “In my view it’s out of control and that’s disadvantaging 16-24 year-olds.

“I think the funding body knows that and that’s why they’re repeating again in March this year that they will be looking closely at the numbers.”

Mr Linford also supported the call made earlier by Mr Doel to look at apprenticeship funding rates and employer contributions.

“I think the only way to go, really, is down the route of minimum fees,” he said.

“If the government expects to get high quality the only way is for the employer to contribute and I think the government plays a huge role in changing the culture of employers to put their hand in their pocket and pay for it.

“Employers will expect a lot more when they pay for it and you know they’ll want it and use it well when they’re paying for it.”

Mr Linford also referenced a survey put out to Lsect members (see page 1), which asked them how they felt about a minimum employer fee for 19+ apprenticeships.

“Of nearly 200 respondents, 60 per cent of those who had a view, yes or no on fees, said a minimum fee, you’ve got to do it.”

BIS Select Committee



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MP for Northampton South



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Closing date for applications: Friday 27 April 2012
Interviews (Newcastle upon Tyne): Friday 11 May 2012



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Closing date: Wednesday 25th April 2012 | Interviews: Tuesday 1st May 2012

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- To be responsible for the performance management of the broader resource functions in particular; Estates and Facilities, Human Resources, ICT and management information teams.

The Candidate:

- Significant senior level experience of directing the finances of a business or organisation of comparable scale and complexity, with an understanding of Board level reporting.
- Qualified accountant with sharp intellect and an outstanding track record of senior financial leadership. Energetic and commercially astute; able to bring innovation, whilst delivering efficiencies.
- The ability to work collaboratively with a range of partners both internally and externally in a manner that supports the ambition and values of the College, and its surrounding communities.

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Should you wish to discuss aspects of the post or apply for an application pack, telephone **Linda Maychin** on **01761 438530**, email linda.maychin@nortcoll.ac.uk or go on to www.nortcoll.ac.uk and click on 'Vacancies'.

Closing date: 27 April 2012

Expected interview date: 8 May 2012

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For full information and an application pack please contact lauracarr@tsl.eu.com

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Our Skills Division is looking to recruit a Learner Recruitment Co-ordinator. The overall aim is to build and maintain a network of long-term partnerships with relevant external agencies, employers and learners to help us achieve our stringent recruitment targets for 16-18 years old apprentices and other workplace learners.

You will need to be a self-starter, highly motivated and with an ability to work on your own initiative.

You must be able to develop an in-depth knowledge of local employers, develop business via sales calls and other media, arrange client visits and obtain opportunities.

In addition you will work with colleagues to launch local initiatives to improve employer engagement such as hosting events and breakfast meetings.

This is a permanent position and the salary will be £20,000 per year plus uncapped bonus.

The Learner Recruitment Co-ordinator will have previous successful experience of generating apprenticeships in several vocational areas and previous successful experience of marketing and generating new business within a training environment.

We are looking for someone with experience of working within a target-driven environment, excellent knowledge of market sectors and opportunities and excellent verbal and written communication skills.

Closing date: Monday 30th April 2012 | Interviews: Wednesday 9th May 2012

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The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London



Head of School – Hairdressing & Beauty

Full-time - Permanent - Ref: 11/07 - Tottenham and Enfield Centres
Salary range £45,102 – £49,002 pa - 37 days annual leave

Closing date: 14th May 2012
Interviews: w/c 28th May 2012

We are looking for a dynamic and innovative Head of School for Hairdressing and Beauty to lead the area and develop new provision. You will be required to develop an effective business model for our salons and provision. You will be responsible for the leadership and management of the Curriculum across our two centres, including employer partnerships.

Head of Teaching & Learning

Full-time - Permanent - Ref: 11/42 - Tottenham Centre
Salary range £45,102 – £49,002 pa - 37 days annual leave

Closing date: 8th May 2012
Interviews: w/c 21st May 2012

In preparation for the new Ofsted Inspection Framework, we are planning ahead and looking for a dynamic, innovative, teacher trained manager to assist with quality improvement. This is an exciting cross-college role working with managers and teachers to achieve agreed improvement targets.

Curriculum Manager in Construction

Full-time - Permanent - Ref: 11/44 - Tottenham Centre
Salary range £39,321 – £42,684 pa - 37 days annual leave

Closing date: 8th May 2012
Interviews: w/c 21st May 2012

The School of Construction and the Built Environment is seeking to appoint a Curriculum Manager for our Tottenham Centre. You will have responsibility for Multi-skills, Carpentry and Brickwork vocational areas.

Understanding of the curriculum and qualifications structure is essential as well as the ability to lead quality improvement strategies to secure excellent success and progression rates. You will have a sound knowledge of the Construction environment to ensure employer and learner needs are met in full.

Programmes for Employment Manager

Full-time - Permanent - Ref: 11/45
Salary range £39,321 – £42,684 pa - 37 days annual leave

Closing date: 8th May 2012
Interviews: w/c 21st May 2012

The College is successfully delivering Skills support for the unemployed in a range of vocational areas and this area of work is expanding. We are seeking to appoint an experienced Manager who will work with the college and its partners to deliver training and employment opportunities to clients.

This role will involve close working relationships with Job Centre Plus, employers, external training agencies and clients requiring access to training which the college plans to offer. The role also involves you leading the delivery of workplace qualifications, along with ensuring all the contract outcomes are being met.

The successful candidate will have experience in delivering large projects which have fully met the contract targets. You will have experience in delivering and teaching on work based learning programmes. A full teaching qualification is essential for this post.

For further information visit www.conel.ac.uk/staff/vacancies
Email recruitment@staff.conel.ac.uk Tel 020 8442 3045 (answerphone)

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FE Week Sudoku challenge

	9			6	3	7	1	
	4	3					5	
7			8		4			2
8		4		2	6	1		
		5				3		
		2	9	7		8		6
3			6		1			9
	8					4	7	
	5	1	7	8			6	

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

4								9
					2	7		3
	3	9		6	4	1	8	
	7		3					
		2	9		8	4	6	
					6		7	
	6	3	8	1		2	5	
1		4						
5								6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

3	9	7	5	1	2	4	6	8
1	6	2	9	8	4	5	3	7
5	4	8	6	7	3	9	1	2
6	3	5	7	9	8	2	4	1
7	1	4	3	2	6	8	5	9
8	2	9	4	5	1	3	7	6
9	8	3	1	6	5	7	2	4
2	5	6	8	4	7	1	9	3
4	7	1	2	3	9	6	8	5

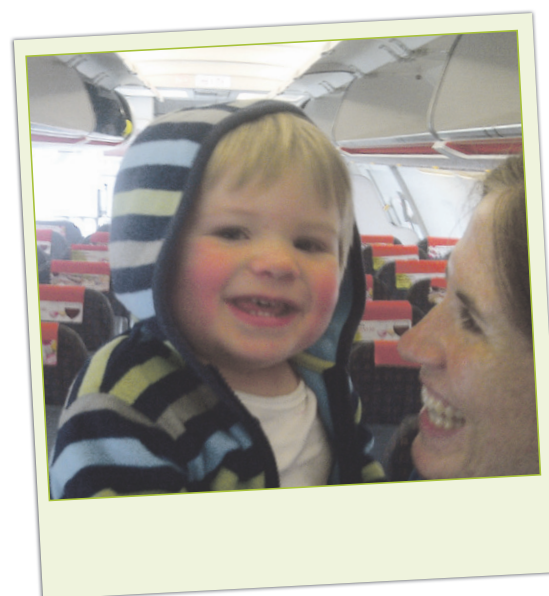
Difficulty:
EASY

4	8	9	7	2	1	5	3	6
5	3	7	9	8	6	2	4	1
1	6	2	5	4	3	8	9	7
9	2	3	8	7	4	6	1	5
6	1	4	2	3	5	7	8	9
7	5	8	1	6	9	4	2	3
2	4	5	3	9	7	1	6	8
8	9	1	6	5	2	3	7	4
3	7	6	4	1	8	9	5	2

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

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